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A Specimen of the White-tailed Jack Rabbit, *Lepus townsendii*, from Illinois

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A specimen of the white-tailed jack rabbit (*Lepus townsendii campanius*) was shot by Charles C. St. John on December 29, 1947, near Blanding, six miles west-northwest of Hanover, Jo Daviess County, Illinois, and is now preserved as a study skin in the Museum of Natural History, University of Illinois. This apparently is the first specimen from Illinois of the white-tailed jack rabbit that has been preserved for identification purposes. However, this is not the first time jack rabbits have been seen in northwestern Illinois, for we have several oral reports of their occurrence in that part of the state and two authors (Mohr, 1942, and Yeager, 1945) mention their presence. This specimen supplements these earlier reports, all of which apparently were based on sight records.

White-tailed jack rabbits probably have been present in the northwestern corner of Illinois since historic time, but have always been rare. Residents of Jo Daviess County, Illinois, tell us they have seen jack rabbits infrequently for as long as they can remember. The report of varying hares in northern Illinois in 1834 (see Mabel B. Shelford, 1913) may well have referred to white-tailed jack rabbits instead, for white-tailed jack rabbits acquire a white coat in winter much like that of varying or snowshoe hares. A white-tailed jack rabbit was shot near Lanark, 32 miles east-southeast of the Blanding locality, in the winter of 1946-7, judging from a description of an animal given us. In the fall of 1942, a rabbit that was light-colored and had the general appearance of a varying hare, was seen among the young pines in White Pines Forest State Park, Ogle County, Illinois, by V. E. Shelford and O. W. Tie-meier. We think this was a white-tailed jack rabbit.

The specimen from near Blanding in Jo Daviess County was shot on the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad right-of-way. This right-of-way is adjacent to the Savanna Ordnance Depot, which parallels the Mississippi River for about 13 miles and averages about two miles wide. This depot should be an ideal refuge for wildlife since hunting is not permitted within

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the depot and random trespassing is prohibited. White-tailed deer are present within its boundaries and reports indicate white-tailed jack rabbits are quite common therein.

Reports on the mammals of Illinois, such as Cory (1912) and Necker and Hatfield (1941), and on mammals of eastern United States, have failed to record white-tailed jack rabbits from Illinois or from east of the Mississippi River. Nelson (1910) in his monograph of the rabbits did not record *Lepus townsendii* from east of the Mississippi either, although he records it from Muscatine, along the eastern border of central Iowa. Leopold (1947), in reviewing the distribution of the white-tailed jack rabbit in Wisconsin, is uncertain as to the natural range of *Lepus townsendii* there, for the distributional picture is complicated by introductions and plantings. *Lepus townsendii* apparently occurred natively and naturally in Grant and Iowa counties of extreme southwestern Wisconsin, and probably in Dunn County, west central Wisconsin. It seems safe to assume that the white-tailed jack rabbit, *Lepus townsendii campanius*, occurred natively in northwestern Illinois and northward through southwestern and west-central Wisconsin, west of the 89th parallel.

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